

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT FEES CHARGED IN PROBATE COURT CASES and HOW TO APPLY FOR DEFERRAL OF COURT FEES

1. **WHAT FEES OR COSTS ARE CHARGED?** There are various fees and costs to file papers to pursue court cases for guardianship, conservatorship, and probate. Go online to the Clerk of the Court or to the Self-Service Center to see the current fees charged for the following types of actions:

A. Guardianship and/or Conservatorship:

- To file A PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT GUARDIAN AND/OR CONSERVATOR, for a minor
- To file a PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT GUARDIAN AND/OR CONSERVATOR for an adult PLUS the cost of the COURT INVESTIGATOR REGARDING THE PETITION TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN AND/OR CONSERVATOR for an adult
- To pay the cost of the COURT ACCOUNTANT REGARDING A PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF ANNUAL OR FINAL ACCOUNTING
- To file an OBJECTION TO ANY PETITION, if this is first time you filed court papers in this case

B. Probate of Estates (with a will or without a will)

- To file an APPLICATION FOR INFORMAL PROBATE OF AN ESTATE (whether there is a will or not)
- To file an AFFIDAVIT FOR TRANSFER OF REAL PROPERTY
- To file a DEMAND FOR NOTICE to creditors

C. To give legal notice of the case to anyone entitled to notice by law:

- Costs vary, depending on where the person is located, or how many times the sheriff or process server tries to serve the person. There are fees for Publication too

D. Other costs:

- For the issuance by the Clerk of Court for a Summons or Subpoena;
- To get your fingerprints taken and to pay the costs for processing the completed fingerprint card;
- For service of process or costs of service by publication;
- To get a copy or a certified copy of any court order or judgment or paperwork;
- To file an appeal of a case to a higher court;
- To photocopy court papers for the record on appeal;
- To pay for court reporter or transcriber fees of court trials or hearings;

2. WHO PAYS THE COURT FEES AND COSTS?

A. Guardianships and/or Conservatorships:

- **For an adult:** Fees and costs related to the guardian and/or conservator are **paid by the estate of the adult** who is said to need the guardian and/or conservator. But, if you ask for, and are granted, a waiver or deferral, and the Judge denies the PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT, the Petitioner will be ordered to pay back to the court the fees and costs that were waived or deferred and remain unpaid.
- **For a minor:** Fees and costs related to the guardian and/or conservator are the responsibility of the **petitioner**. If the child's estate is sufficient, the guardian or conservator can file court papers later asking to be reimbursed for the amount of the costs and fees incurred.

B. Probate of estates (with a will or without a will)

- Fees and costs related to the APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT are **paid by the estate**, or you can pay as the applicant and later ask the court to order that you be repaid by the estate. But, if you ask for and are granted a waiver or deferral, and the Judge denies the APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT or denies the appointment to you, the Petitioner will be ordered to pay back to the court the fees and costs that were waived or that were deferred and remain unpaid.
- For a creditor or other person who files a DEMAND FOR NOTICE or otherwise objects to a court proceeding about the probate of an estate, fees and costs are paid BY THE PERSON WHO DEMANDS NOTICE or who is objecting.

3. WHAT ABOUT A PARTY WHO CANNOT PAY COURT FEES OR COSTS?

Sometimes, for very serious reasons, a party cannot pay court fees and costs at the time of filing court papers or asking for another court service. If this happens, the party can apply for a DEFERRAL or WAIVER of court costs and fees.

A. WAIVER may be requested when a party does not have financial resources to pay now **and probably cannot do so in the future**. Generally, waivers are only given at the end of a case. The only time you can get a waiver at the beginning of a case is if you are filing for an ORDER OF PROTECTION or an INJUNCTION AGAINST HARRASSMENT.

B. DEFERRAL may be requested by a **party who cannot pay now**, but who may be able to make payments in the future. That is why the Court will most likely grant you a DEFERRAL rather than a WAIVER, because everyone needs to bear his or her fair share of the court fees and costs.

If at the end of your case, you meet the financial criteria and still cannot pay your court fees, you can ask the Court to waive or further defer your court fees and costs.

4. COURT PAPERWORK FOR A DEFERRAL OR WAIVER OF COURT FEES AND COSTS:

- A. Application for Deferral of Court Fees and/or Costs and Consent to Judgment: You must file the Application with the Clerk of the Court. You should know that the Application for DEFERRAL OF COURT FEES AND/OR COSTS includes a CONSENT TO ENTRY OF JUDGMENT.**

By signing this document, you agree that a judgment may be entered against you for all fees and/or costs that are deferred, but that remain unpaid after thirty (30) calendar days following the entry of final judgment

At the conclusion of the case unless the Judge has already waived the fees/costs, you will receive a Notice indicating how much is owed and what steps you must take to avoid a judgment against you if you are still unable to pay. In filling out the Application, check the boxes that apply to your situation as follows

- **Paragraph 1:** Check the boxes that tell the Court what fees and/or costs you need deferred.
- **Paragraph 2:** Check the box that tells the court what your interest is in the case
- **Paragraph 3:** Read **Paragraph 3** to see if you receive any governmental assistance. If you do, check the box that applies to your situation and then go directly to the end of the last page and **date and sign the Application in front of the clerk or notary public**. If you do not receive governmental assistance, go to **Paragraph 4**.
- **Paragraph 4:** Check box A or box B and then fill out the Financial Questionnaire. If your financial condition gets better, you must tell the court, so that even if you cannot pay now, you must pay later if you have the money to do so

- B. Affidavit in Support of Application for Deferral or Waiver of Service Costs:** A deferral or waiver of fees to pay the sheriff for personal service, or the newspaper for publication of service, **must be applied for separately**. To do so, fill out the form described in Section 4(A) above, and the additional court form called AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR DEFERRAL OR WAIVER OF SERVICE COSTS. Here are some important points:

- **For service by the sheriff:** Did you try to ask the other party to voluntarily accept service? If not, you must have a very good reason for not doing so.
- **For publication of service:** Why are you publishing instead of using another method of service? This is important, not only to get fees waived or deferred, but because service by publication is only used as a last resort. **BE SURE TO READ THE SELF-SERVICE CENTER INSTRUCTIONS ON SERVICE BEFORE YOU SERVE BY PUBLICATION.** This could save you time, effort, and difficulty!

- C. Order for Deferral or Waiver:** Do not fill out this form except the caption that includes the name of the petitioner/plaintiff, name of the respondent/defendant. The Special Commissioner will fill out this form after he or she has reviewed your application. This form tells you whether your costs have been waived, deferred or denied.

- D. Request for Hearing:** DO NOT FILL OUT THIS FORM. Take this form to the Court with you when you make your request to have your costs waived or deferred. Use this form only if your application for deferral/waiver has been denied and you want a hearing to tell the Judge why your costs should be deferred or waived.

5. HOW DO I APPLY FOR A DEFERRAL?

- A.** Complete the court paperwork for the APPLICATION FOR DEFERRAL OF COURT FEES AND/OR COSTS and CONSENT TO ENTRY OF JUDGEMENT along with the court papers you want to file for whatever court proceeding you are involved with. **Do not sign** the Application until you get to the Filing Counter if you are hand-delivering the Application to the Probate Registrar. You can sign the Application at the Court, when you go to the Filing Counter and avoid the cost of paying a Notary Public. If you are mailing your Application to the Clerk of the Court, you will need to **sign the Application in front of a Notary Public** before you mail your application.
- B.** Take the Application and all the other court papers you need to file to the filing counter of the Clerk of Court at the court location where you filed the papers. Information on how to know whether to file in the Downtown court location or the Southeast Court Facility in Mesa or the Northwest Court Facility in Surprise is contained on the instruction sheets that go with the court papers for the court process you are filing on.

NOTE: It is always a good idea to come in person to apply for a DEFERRAL OR WAIVER, unless you have a medical or other good reason to why you cannot appear in person. However, you can mail the application to the Probate Registrar, 125 West Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona 85003. The Special Commissioner will review your application, determine if you qualify for a deferral or waiver, and notify you about whether you qualify for a deferral or waiver.

- C.** Give the **original** Application and sign it in front of the Probate Registrar. The Special Commissioner (or sometimes a Judge) will usually decide whether to grant the Application or not, depending on the information given in the Application.
- D.** If the Application is granted, file the court papers for the court process you are involved with. If the Application is denied, pay the fee or costs. If you do not agree with the Court's decision, you can request a hearing in front of a Judge. Use the form REQUEST FOR HEARING AND ORDER in your packet.
- E.** If the Deferral or Waiver is for Personal Service by the sheriff, take the papers that need to be served, along **with a copy** of the ORDER OF DEFERRAL OR WAIVER, to the sheriff. Instructions on how to do this are contained on the help sheet that is in the packet on service of process.

F. If the Deferral or Waiver is for Publication, follow the instructions contained on the help sheet that is in the packet on service of process.

G. REMINDER. If you still cannot pay the fees and costs at the end of the case, and believe you should receive a waiver or further deferral (payment schedule), you must file a Supplemental Application at the end of the case, or a Consent Judgment will be entered against you. You will receive instructions on how to do this at the end of the case.

OTHER HELP: Court personnel can answer questions about court procedures but are unable to give legal advice. If you have questions about matters requiring legal advice, the Self-Service Center has a list of lawyers who can give you legal advice and who can help you on a task-by-task basis for a fee, and a list of court-approved mediators as well. View the lists at the Self-Service Centers or online.

**ALL FORMS REFERRED TO IN THESE INSTRUCTIONS
ARE AVAILABLE AT THE SELF-SERVICE CENTER.**